

Christian Dior: Intimates and Jewelry



Once a month when the Wizard and Oliver went out to make money, one little Dior was left alone, all undressed with no place to go.

THE PERFORMING ARTISTRY OF LAURIE ANDERSON

By Don Shewey

Out of the darkness, a voice:
"Our plan is to drop a lot of odd objects onto your country from the air. And some of these objects will be useful. And some of them will just be... odd. Proving that these oddities were produced by a people free enough to think of making them in the first place. The United States helps, not harms, developing nations by using their natural resources and raw materials."

The voice is hushed, wry and seductive, weird and funny. It comes from a shadowy figure at center stage, a slender, androgynous-looking person whose spiky haircut frames an angelic, dimpled face. Illuminated only by the slides and films projected onto a giant movie screen behind her, Laurie Anderson goes on to tell a story about how some American farmers during a drought began renting their silos to the Federal Government for the storage of nuclear missile heads. Her narration is illustrated on the screen by a photonegative image of the Statue of Liberty overlapping a film of the American flag spinning around and around in a clothes dryer. The red stripes flicker like flames at the glow-in-the-dark hem of Lady Liberty. As Anderson turns to face the screen and play a soaring solo on an electric violin, she becomes a mad empress overlooking a radioactive cityscape, her music evoking the whines of sirens and the sobs of people.

These are but a few fleeting images from the performance-art work "United States," which Laurie Anderson has been composing and showing in parts for several years. The complete version of this four-part, two-evening extravaganza is currently receiving its world premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, thus capping the meteoric rise of an oddball adept in an avant-garde medium: performance art. John Rockwell, a music critic of The New York Times has

Don Shewey writes frequently about the performing arts.

said that Laurie Anderson's specialness lies in the diversity of her talent; she is at once a composer, lyricist, singer and electronic wizard. What the 35-year-old Laurie Anderson also possesses after a decade in the art form is something no other performance artist has ever had: popularity. "O Superman," which Anderson wrote and recorded with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, went to No. 2 on the British charts after Warner Bros. Records bought and released it in England in the fall of 1980, and a later album, "Big Science," which includes "O Superman," has sold more than 150,000 copies worldwide. To promote her album, Laurie Anderson for the first time forsook her usual art spaces to play rock venues on a tour across the country last spring, and when her eight-day stand at the Brooklyn Academy of Music is over, she will take "United States" on a 16-city tour of Europe and the United States. When a major pop-record label and a high culture musical institution join forces to endorse an experimental artist, it strongly suggests that performance art has infiltrated the mainstream after a decade or more of appealing mainly to the arty SoHo crowd in the lofts and basements of lower Manhattan.

□

The term "performance art" has been applied retroactively to describe many kinds of animate art since the early days of the century, when Russian Futurists strolled the streets of old St. Petersburg with homemade tattoos on their cheeks, and published manifestos explaining "Why We Paint Ourselves." But the term first came into general usage about 10 years ago as a catchall label for a multitude of artistic activities so new and varied that even today critics quarrel over what is and what isn't performance art. The narrow definition might be "performance by artists," and the modern manifestations

of this have roots in the Futurists' cafe and cabaret "evenings" and the Dada frolics of post-World War I Europe, which were essentially an excuse for visual artists to step out of their studios and have fun — to paint themselves instead of their canvases. In a broader sense, performance art has become a useful term to describe the work of an increasing number of

still they are a healthy reaction to the *reductio ad absurdum* of modernism and its last, "minimalist," gasp.

After World War II, there occurred a leveling of the cultural landscape — a Hiroshima of the arts. Reinterpreting Marcel Duchamp's dictum, "Anything can be art," for postwar America, the composer John Cage declared that the purpose of art was "simply" to make us "wake up to the very life we're living." Cage's influence inspired countless experiments which effectively reduced art to the tiniest increments of human activity, glorifying everyday behavior. This was the logical, and perhaps inevitable, extension of modernism's quest to locate the essence of each art and to express only that essence. But minimalism transformed the notion of purification into a reductive impulse, and that impulse could go too far, stripping art not only of impurities but also of joy and content.

Oppressive though it may have proved as a tradition, minimalism did leave a clean slate for artists. Just as computerization has found a way to convert all forms of information into bits of electronic "memories" that can be stored in

and quickly retrieved from a magic machine, modernism has broken down the individual art forms into a pool of elements available to all artists, whatever form they favor. And it is the performance artists who have taken up the challenge of recombinining speech, song, images, movement and modern technology in new ways.

In its fetish for mixing media, today's performance art most resembles the "happenings" of the 1960's. The brainchildren of Allan Kaprow, a professor of art, "happenings" were often aggressively chaotic events employing words, music, sound, lighting and actions. They were usually performed one time only for an audience of observer-participants. Many of the important young painters of the time — Red Grooms, Claes Oldenburg and Jim Dine — (Continued on Page 46)



**Her panache
is making an
avant-garde
medium a
popular success.**

artists who function in several disciplines and do not neatly fit into any traditional category. Some of these multimedia performers seem in pursuit of the Wagnerian ideal of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the united art work using every genre in an effort to represent the whole of human nature. If such aspirations seem pretentious,

A stick figure flashes on a screen as Laurie Anderson (above) delivers a love song from her seven-hour work, "United States." At left, she relaxes in a Manhattan theater.

AIDS

A New Disease's Deadly Odyssey

By Robin Marantz Henig

Medical detectives are calling it the century's most virulent epidemic. It is as relentless as leukemia, as contagious as hepatitis, and its cause has eluded researchers for more than two years. Acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS, was first seen in homosexual men — particularly those who were promiscuous — but it has now struck so many different groups that its course cannot be predicted.

And despite a massive nationwide microbe hunt involving hundreds of investigators and millions of dollars, scientists simply cannot catch up with it. "We're always a few steps behind," says Dr. William W. Darrow, a research sociologist with the Centers for Disease Control (C.D.C.) in Atlanta, "and that makes us very, very concerned. The disease could be anywhere now."

While AIDS has continued to rage in big-city homosexual communities with terrifying and deadly results, it has also struck Haitian men and women, intravenous-drug users, female partners of drug users, and infants and children. AIDS has become the second-leading cause of death — after uncontrollable bleeding — in hemophiliacs, and, most recently, a number of surgical patients who have received blood transfusions have contracted AIDS, raising fears among some observers about the nation's blood supply.

The mysterious AIDS organism is generally thought to be a virus or other infectious agent (as opposed to a bacterium) and to be spread in bodily secretions, especially blood and semen. It is responsible for the near-total collapse of the body's immune system, leaving the victim prey to cancers and opportunistic infections that the body is unable to defend against. And, while some of the diseases associated with AIDS can be successfully treated, the underlying immune problem is, apparently, irreversible. The AIDS patient may survive his first bizarre infection, or his second, but he remains vulnerable to successive infections, one of which is likely to kill him.

AIDS is deadly. According to the C.D.C.'s figures for late January, it has struck 958 individuals since it was first seen in 1979, and it has killed 365, a mortality rate of 38 percent; of the cases reported before June 1981, 75 percent are dead. Although these earlier cases probably received less experienced treatment than AIDS patients get today, some fear that the five-year death rate will be higher than 65 percent. Smallpox, by comparison, killed 25 percent of its victims.

According to Dr. James W. Curran, head of the

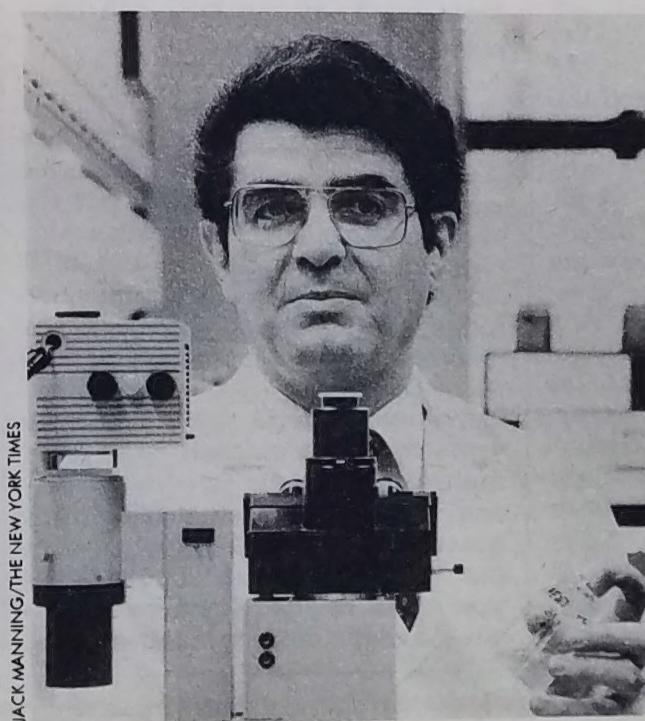
Robin Marantz Henig is the author of "Your Premature Baby," to be published in the spring.

AIDS task force at the C.D.C., "The incidence of AIDS has nearly tripled in the past year, from about seven new cases a week to 20 or more." In December 1982, the center received reports of 92 cases of AIDS — about one-third more than had been received in any other single month.

As AIDS threatens to move into mainstream America, efforts to find its cause and stop its spread have intensified. In January, Congress allocated \$2 million to the C.D.C. for AIDS research. Homosexual communities in major cities have set up support groups that provide information and guidance for victims and raise money for research. Hemophiliacs, many of whom depend on a clotting agent gathered from the blood of thousands of donors, have recently recommended that those at risk for AIDS be eliminated from the donor pool. Though the moral and legal implications of such screening have yet to be determined, blood suppliers are re-examining their procedures and the Department of Health and Human Services is working on proposals that would provide stricter screening of blood donors.

Meanwhile, AIDS continues on its mysterious and perplexing course. "If Alfred Hitchcock were alive, he'd have his next movie," says Dr. Abe M. Macher, an infectious-disease specialist at the National Institutes of Health. "When people discuss this syndrome at scientific meetings, it sounds like something out of 'The Andromeda Strain.'"

The search for the AIDS agent is being coordinated in Atlanta, at the Centers for Disease Control. There, 20 full-time physicians and other professionals (with help from 80 professionals working part-time) canvass the four corners of the outbreak — New York,

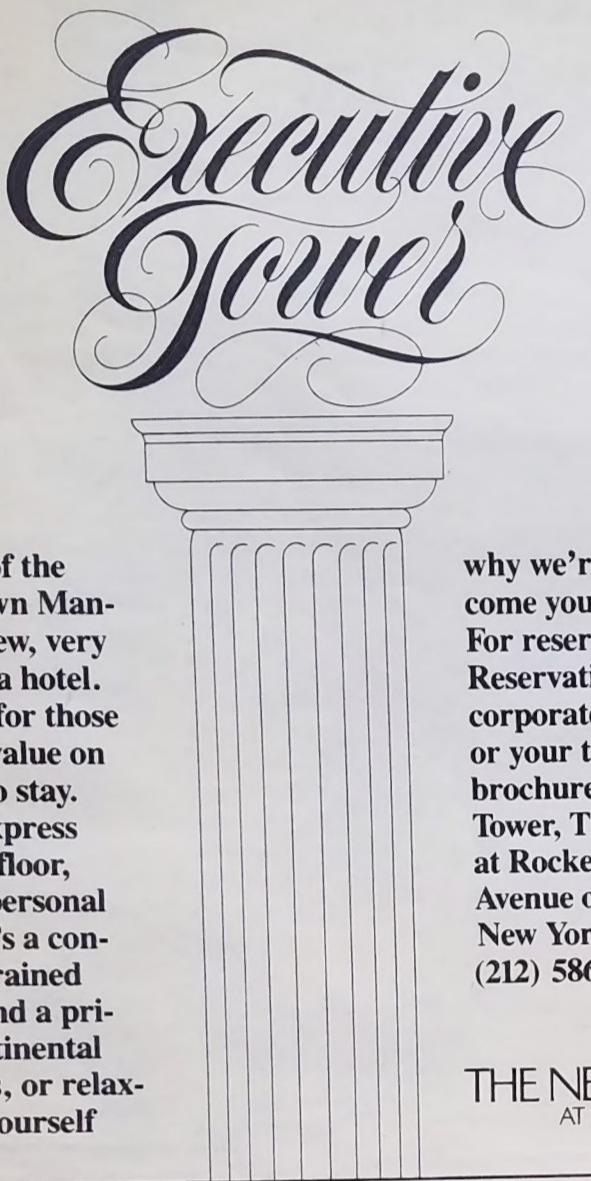


JACK MANNING/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Interferon seems to be effective in some cases of Kaposi's sarcoma, an AIDS-related cancer.

Dr. Bijan Safai, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York City

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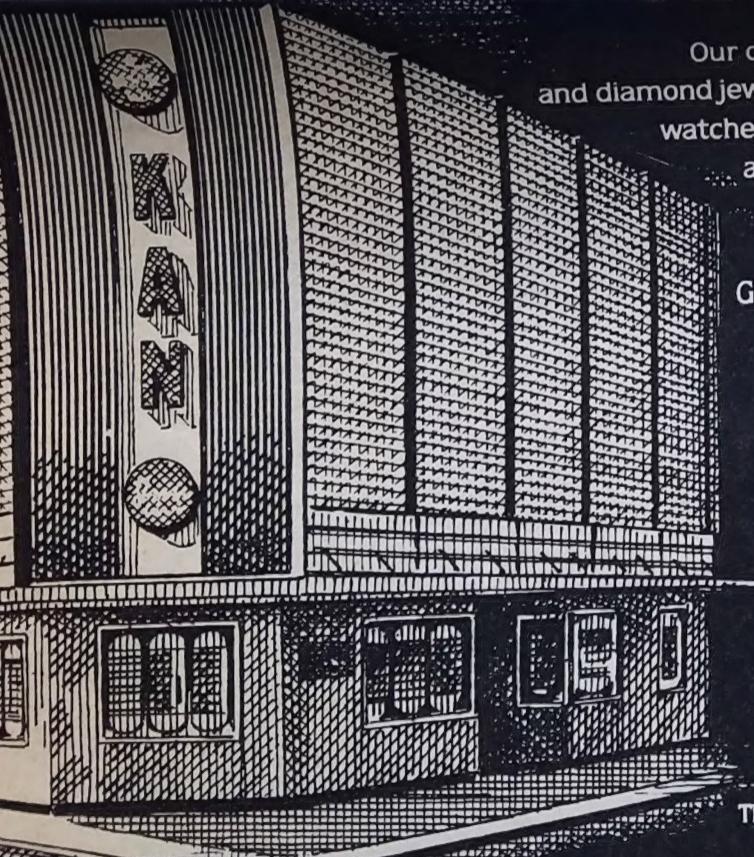
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ANDERSON

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did "happenings" as well as their more conventional work. testing John Cage's elastic definition of an artist's materials, "happenings" to some extent reflected the antimaterialism of the 1960's youth culture by rejecting the market-place or museum-piece conception of art — they produced no objects that could be bought or preserved. In the 1970's, performance art reinstated the clear distinction between audience and performer, sometimes emphasizing the primacy of the performer with a vengeance. Probably the most extreme art performer of the period was Chris Burden, who once had himself nailed to a Volkswagen in a mock crucifixion, and, in a piece entitled "Shoot," had a friend fire a real bullet into his arm from 15 feet away.

Today's performance artists are more concerned with searching for ways to combine their private visions with public concerns. And after a hermetic decade, it seems a sign of developing maturity that performance artists are now tapping the rock-music world, television and the theater for ways to reach a mass audience.

Laurie Anderson embodies both the visual-art component of performance art and its multimedia aspect. She is an accomplished sculptor and photographer — an exhibition of her art objects mounted by the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London is currently touring England and Scotland — yet in performance she plays a violin and keyboard instruments, sing-speaks in a sly, friendly voice and always brings along a giant movie-screen backdrop for the slides and films that supply the visual dimension of her compositions. The visuals, all of which are her own work, sometimes illustrate but usually have only a tangential or poetic relationship to the songs. When Anderson waxes romantic, murmuring, "Your eyes — it's a day's work to look into them," fat white clouds drift across a deep blue sky on the screen behind her. And when accompanied by horror-movie wolf howls, a huge photo of a three-pronged wall socket looks like a child's frightened face — an image at once humorous and strangely moving.

Speaking of Anderson's effect on performance art, a

fellow practitioner, 24-year-old Tim Miller, who belongs to a generation young enough to take the art form for granted, explains: "Performance art has a tradition of boredom, of extended time, of repetition. People didn't want to have anything to do with it. That's why Laurie is so important. She's popular, but epic; show-biz, but avant-garde."

Born in Wayne, Ill., in 1947 and raised amid a large, affluent family, Laurie Anderson studied art history at Barnard College in the late 1960's and then dabbled in sculpture and music before turning to performance art. "I tried to be as quirky as I could," she recalled recently.

Quirkiness came easily. Anderson's best-known sculpture from that period looks like an ordinary table, but a viewer placing his elbows on the table and his hands over his ears can hear music conducted through wood and bone from a concealed tape deck. A musician since childhood, Anderson invented instruments such as the tape-bow violin, which replaces the traditional horsehair bow with a strip of audio tape, and composed simple songs and sound pieces for it. One such composition, performed in a series cosponsored by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis, featured elegantly dressed classical musicians whose tape-bow violins emitted a sound mixture of voices and bongo drums.

Anderson's first appearance as a performance artist consisted of orchestrating a symphony of car horns at a drive-in bandshell in Vermont. Another early routine involved playing a violin while wearing skates embedded in blocks of ice, all the while talking about the parallels between skating and violin-playing, both of which require balance — skate blades over ice, bow over violin bridge. When the ice melted, the performance was over.

Although Anderson was merely one among dozens of young performance artists groping for a form to match their imagination during the early 1970's, she did have a useful talent for being in the right place at the right time. She fell in with a motley group of artists who partici-

"I came here with my books, clothes, and the Indian rugs I collect—I never want to be tied down with too many possessions again."

What I want is a place where a 10-year-old boy can eat an ice cream cone without my getting uppity about his making a mess on the sofa."

—Ali MacGraw

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pated in collective performances organized by the entrepreneur Jean Dupuy in his 13th Street loft and at the Kitchen in SoHo. One of several centers that sprang up to exhibit performance art, the Kitchen also arranged touring expeditions to other hospitable performance spaces across the country and abroad, and Anderson quickly plugged into this circuit.

Probably the turning point of Anderson's career was her appearance at the 1978 Nova Convention, where, through an electronic filter that made her voice sound like a frog's, she performed a monologue from "Americans on the Move," the first section of "United States." A tribute to the writer and perverse visionary William S. Burroughs, the Nova Convention brought together an unprecedented collision of poets (Allen Ginsberg, John Giorno), composers (John Cage, Philip Glass), punk rockers (Patti Smith, the B52's) and performance artists.

Emboldened by the punk example to experiment with using a rock band, Anderson became more and more drawn to the world of inter-

media, a realm already inhabited by others who were forging their own cross-disciplinary forms. Meredith Monk, for instance, originally a choreographer, has been creating large-scale pieces since the mid-60's and calling them "operas" or "live movies" or "theater cantatas," but they are all performance collages that attempt to transcend the barriers between dance, theater and music. Composer Robert Ashley began using television in 1975 to add dimensions to his minimalist rock music. A sampling from his television opera "Perfect Lives (Private Parts)," shown on the Public Broadcasting System in 1981, features particularly exciting work by the video artists John Sanborn and Kit Fitzgerald. Mabou Mines, a nine-member theater collective founded in 1970, has a direct-address style of performing, a boundless fascination with high-tech gadgetry and an extraordinary concern for the visual elements of its members' work (they hire sculptors rather than set designers, for instance) that link them as strongly to performance art as to theater. JoAnne Akalaitis's "Dead

End Kids," for example, is a sort of intellectual vaudeville that uses film, dance, music and comedy to compile a history of nuclear power, while another director in the collective, Lee Breuer, calls his "Shaggy Dog Animation" and "Hajj" performance poetry.

The performance art of Laurie Anderson and the intermedia form of her "United States" — the pop-collage style of performance, the poetic use of technology, the attempt to make video images "dance" to music — are to some extent a composite of elements from the work of these seminal artists. But if she did not create the intermedia model, Anderson has certainly brought it to a larger audience than any of her predecessors, who still seem intimidatingly experimental to the general public.

While many artists acknowledge that performance art is their way of seizing the means of theater — present time and public space — without its cumbersome conventions of plot and character, Anderson is one who makes a clear distinction between her work and theater. "Traditional plays invent charac-

ters, change them and predict their postplay lives," she explained in the 1979 premiere issue of Performance Art Magazine. Her approach, she said, leaves her "freer to be disjunctive and jagged and to focus on incidents, ideas, collisions. . . . Personally, I feel closer to the attitude of the stand-up comedian — not only because I believe that laughter is extremely powerful but because the comedian works in real time."

Anderson's sense of humor exhibits itself not so much in jokes or one-liners as in expert timing and cagey delivery. In performance, she often distorts her naturally mellifluous voice with electronic filters, creating multiple personalities. In "Walk the Dog," a song about finding strangeness in the most familiar things, one such device pitches her voice helium-high, so that when she makes delirious exclamations she sounds like an idiot child. The same filter sinks her voice two octaves to produce an exaggeratedly masculine croaking that suggests the Cookie Monster from "Sesame Street" trapped inside a computer.

Anderson's best songs fuse

electronics with sustained exercises in wordplay. Her British hit record, "O Superman," for instance, begins with a tape loop of Anderson's voice murmuring "Ha, Ha, Ha . . ." in a metronomic fashion that continues as background throughout the song's nine-minute length. Meanwhile, Anderson channels her voice through a vocoder, which alters it into robotlike sounds, and stitches together everyday expressions in a manner that is both comical and disturbing. After a standard automatic phone-answering message — "Hi, I'm not home right now" — and a familiar response — "Hello, this is your mother" — comes a more ominous message: "Here come the planes. They're American planes. Made in America. Smoking or nonsmoking?" Next, the postman's credo, "Neither snow nor rain nor gloom of night shall stay these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," is juxtaposed with another official-sounding but somehow sinister recitation: "Cause when love is gone, there's always justice; and when justice is gone, there's

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Content With One's Odd Lot

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The best reason for commissioning an architect-designed house is that there is no other choice — no existing house that could possibly satisfy quirky desires and needs. The next best reason is a love of architecture that engenders a wish to experience a building's creation intimately, from conception through completion, every muddy step of the way.

Both of these motives were present in force for the retired couple whose Princeton, N.J., house is shown here. Because they wanted to live within walking distance of the town, they purchased an unlikely lot — 100 feet by 150 feet, with a huge maple tree in the center. They then presented it — along with a list of specific requests — to Todd Schliemann and Richard Olcott, a team of young architects.

Among other things, the clients wanted their new living room to graciously accommodate the furnishings from their former one. They wanted a single-lane, indoor swimming pool whose function would be therapeutic, as opposed to recreational. They wanted the house to be "introspective" — to turn its back to the neighborhood. They wanted some sort of patio or

Constructed of buff-gray, scored concrete block, the exterior grid (top) receives doors and windows gracefully. In compliance with a request of the clients, masonry was chosen for its ease of care and for its energy efficiency. An opening in the dining room wall (right) is able to "frame" a prized portrait in the living room.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANGDON CLAY

In a triumph of ingenuity, a small masonry house fills a tall order for a Princeton, N.J., couple who asked for — and got — the architectural moon on their shoebox-sized piece of property.



deck. And — oh, yes — the tree must be spared.

The house that Schliemann and Olcott designed, and that Nick Mauro & Son, Princeton contractors, built, delivers all of this — and more — delightfully. Sited at the rear of the property, the house is laid out to suggest a piazza surrounded by buildings on three sides. At the back of a courtyard is the main part of the structure, which houses the living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms and three baths. To one side of this is a two-story tower with the wife's study on the ground level, the husband's above. Opposite the tower is the pool structure — a sort of modern Greek stoa, or colonnade, that is more than 70 feet long and splayed an imperceptible six degrees to create a forced perspective that makes the property appear wider and deeper than it actually is.

With this house, Schliemann and Olcott took a perplexing set of demands and limitations, put them through the process and made them come out looking like opportunities — precisely what good design is all about. They even managed to use the big maple tree advantageously to shade the south-facing patio. ■

The single-lane swimming pool, which is 8 feet wide, 65 feet long and 4½ feet deep, is designed for therapeutic, rather than recreational, purposes. It can be reached from inside the house via the bedroom. There is also an outside entry for neighbors, to whom the owners have made the pool available for physical therapy.

ANDERSON

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always force; and when force is gone, there's always Mom. Hi, Mom!" The song concludes with an eerie petition: "So hold me, Mom, in your long arms, in your automatic arms . . . your petrochemical arms, your electronic arms, in your military arms."

Evocative as they are on records, Anderson's songs don't become complete until performed live. Those loaded images of "American planes" and unstoppable "couriers," that revered "Superman" and the mother with "petrochemical arms," link myth and menace, military arms and their maternal counterparts.

The image of the American flag in the clothes dryer is particularly rich with possible meanings, coming as it does at the end of the first evening of "United States" and lingering onstage long enough to inspire several interpretations. When Anderson serenades the glow-in-the-dark Statue of Liberty, the immediate connotation is that of a nuclear-age Nero. Originally a gesture welcoming immigrants to America, the statue now seems to warn them away. Then it can become the picture of this small girl facing a ghostly reflection of her world, like something out of Lewis Carroll — Alice Down the Missile Silo?

Perhaps other associations would occur, but Anderson turns back to the audience and says: "Breadbasket. Melting pot. Meltdown. Shutdown." Blackout.



At her Canal Street loft in lower Manhattan, Laurie Anderson and sundry associates were gearing up for her Brooklyn appearance, and every corner of the recently renovated space, now divided into living areas, rehearsal space and a 16-track recording studio, bustled with quietly frantic activity.

At the end of the loft space, opposite a 9-foot by 12-foot projection screen hanging from the ceiling, Perry Hoberman, Anderson's projectionist and mechanical right-hand man, tested a tableful of equipment. In performance, Anderson uses two conventional slide projectors and one with a mirror attachment that flashes spots of light across the screen, along with a film projector and a film strip — a complicated

system which Hoberman plays as if it were a Pac-Man, cross-cutting myriad images with dazzling speed and precision.

Meanwhile, in the studio, a musical rehearsal was in progress. Two horn players, Chuck Fisher and Bill Obrecht, practiced their parts against a prerecorded percussion track by David Van Tieghem, Anderson's regular percussionist, who also performs outside the group. Anderson herself added a few chords on her Oberheim synthesizer while casually consulting with Roma Baran, who produced her single record and album and generally serves as an assistant music director. Baran's dog, Brandy, napped underneath a large studio console full of knobs, switches and blinking lights.

Next door, Anderson's all-purpose laundry-dark room-editing studio was temporarily unpeopled. A long counter top brimmed with film canisters, editing paraphernalia, slide carousels, reels of film labeled "White Clouds" and "Horses Passing," and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of slides lined up in long rows divided by cards that read "Snowy Day," "Bowling" and "Faucets." Surveying this atmosphere of creative clutter, one can hardly imagine how it all comes together. Sometimes it doesn't. "When there are so many machines, there are a million things that can happen," Laurie Anderson admitted. But after settling at the kitchen table and nervously lighting the half-cigarette she allows herself hourly, she quickly added that "breakdown is important to me. It's exciting to try to improvise."

Throughout the loft, bookshelves bulged with volumes bearing the word "America" in their titles, from "The American Heritage History of the Law in America" to "Weird America." The talk turned to how "United States" came into being. "Since I tour a lot, especially in Europe," she said, "I've frequently found myself sitting across the dinner table from people who ask me, 'How can you live in a country like that?' I really am on the defensive a lot of the time, and I need to have some way to deal with that.

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ANDERSON

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"The idea was to make a big portrait of the country," she said, "and I divided it up sort of arbitrarily into four parts, transportation, politics, money and love. If there's any throughline, it's some question about America as Utopia and trying to understand how people really feel about living here."

"I've been using as a sourcebook 'The Machine in the Garden,' she explained, referring to Leo Marx's classic study of American culture, which discusses the dreams and impressions of people who came over in the

1600's and 1700's and thought this was Arcadia, the lovely garden setting they had been seeking.

"For me," she continued, "that vision of Utopia is very bound up with technology. This is a country where the machine was supposed to free people from menial tasks, where we wouldn't have the sweatshops and steel mills that England had. I think we've found out how quickly you can mess up a country, how much a machine like just the car can change things utterly. It's not that I object to any of that stuff," Anderson

said. "Another theme of my work is how to live with technology and how to accept it — how to humanize it."

"I'm hoping," says Anderson, "to have a revelation this week about how to describe this idea of Utopia I'm getting at. The piece begins with a story about upstate New York being mistaken for the Garden of Eden, and I want to end the whole thing like 'Huckleberry Finn,' where people sort of light out for the territories. But there aren't any new frontiers left. Outer space is not a dream anymore, not for me. So where do you go?"

Of course, Laurie Anderson did come up with an ending for "United States," but the question of where to go next

still looms large in her own career. Her bridging of the SoHo art world, the commercial pop scene and high-art concert halls is a remarkable accomplishment, but now she faces the dilemma of maintaining her goals and integrity as an artist while remaining attractive to her newfound audience. With an advance from Warner Bros. Records, Anderson recently bought a \$40,000 synthesizer called a Synclavier to use in her next project, a combined record album and videodisk. And Anderson is sufficiently secure in her intentions that she can even make fun of her art, herself, technology and Warner Bros.

"There's a section about Warner Bros. in part three of 'United States.' I hope they

don't mind," she said with a wicked gleam in her eye. "First of all, I point to all this expensive equipment on the stage, the state-of-the-art stuff with which I cast my spell, and I make the point that this stuff doesn't grow on trees. That's when the Warner Bros. insignia comes on the screen with all these dollar signs floating by."

"Then I tell this story where I come into their office and say, 'I have this vision of myself as part of a long tradition of American humor — you know, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Road Runner....'

"And they say, 'Well, we had something more adult in mind.'

"And then I just go, 'Oh, don't worry. I can adapt!'" ■

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Ess-capades

By Richard Silvestri/Puzzles Edited by Eugene T. Maleska

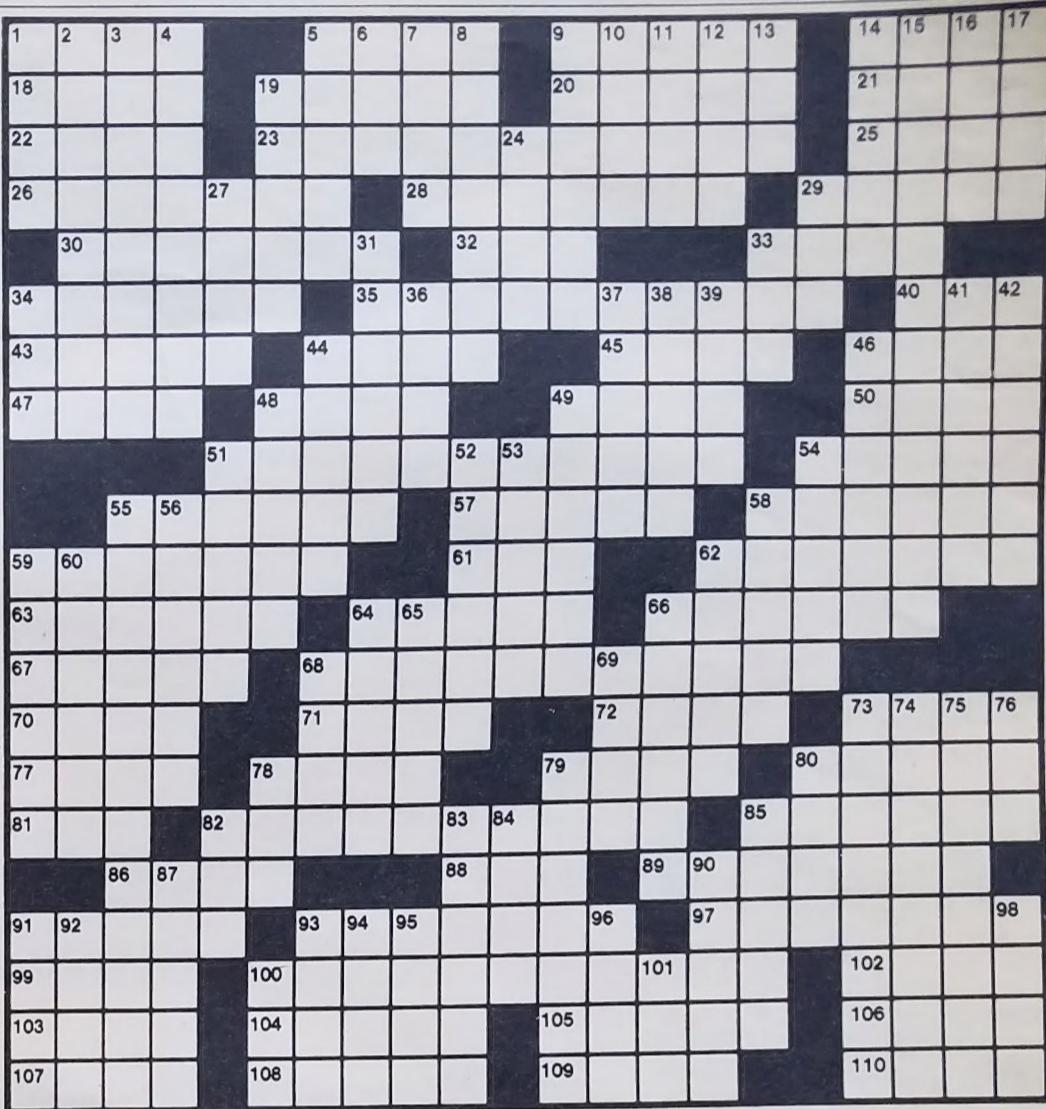
ACROSS
1 Rolling bones
5 Bric-a—
9 Airs
14 Original sinner
18 Egyptian god of life
19 Largest city in Africa
20 Stringed playthings
21 Jungle swing
22 Surveyor's nail
23 Novelist's style?
25 Court proceedings
26 Dinner portion
28 Perturb
29 Sought information
30 Changes shoestrings
32 Yalie
33 Tiny earthmovers

DOWN
1 Bespatter
2 Majestic
3 Grow together
4 Mine-shaft timber
5 Craft for Cleo
6 "6 Rms — Vu"
7 La Scala solo
8 Clot
9 Obscure
10 I, to Plato
11 Small island
12 Zilch
13 Compass point
14 Nautical cry
15 Parent and in-law of a music-making comic?

Diagramless, 21 x 21

ACROSS
1 Spill the beans
5 City in W Fla.
10 Shakespearean king
14 Dormouse
16 Bellowing
17 Together: Mus. dir.
18 Addicts
19 Dross of metal
20 Zane Grey locale
22 Petty officer
23 Confection
24 Agreeable
26 Enticed
27 Subject to the third degree
28 Wild plums
30 Money in Meshed
31 Transmitter
33 Architect Saarinen
34 Apportion
36 Pens
42 Drool
48 Dog tag
49 Trace from a source
50 Site of Fort McIntosh

ACROSS
51 — alai
52 Ass or catapult
53 Happifies
54 Farm structures
56 Classes with common characteristics
57 Singer Vic
58 "Nor iron bars —": Lovelace
59 Furry status symbol
61 Crosses the plate
66 Scope
67 Wine and dine
68 Lingo
69 Ethiopian seaport
71 J.F.K.'s New —
75 Priam's counselor
77 Tell a tale
78 Short story by Poe
81 — public
82 All agog
83 "Deutschland — alles"
84 Compound from ammonia
85 Start of a limerick
86 On which Dido died
87 Wampum
88 Utters
1 Hit song of 1934
2 Abated
3 Of a region
4 Swedish net star
5 Treats in Taxco
6 An asset of mint
7 Mack's vaudeville partner
8 Enamel
9 Celestial Altar
10 Sitter's creation
11 What schs. provide
12 Of the ear
13 Hold in check
15 Monogram of the author of "The Waste Land"
19 Circus performers
21 Soup scoop
22 Kind of anti-union contract
24 Man of the cloth
25 Untrustworthy one
27 Certain apples
29 Prefix with circle or tone
32 Famed Senecan chief
35 "... — passion to tatters". Hamlet
37 Descartes
38 Persia today
39 Buster Brown's dog
40 Perpetually
41 Antitoxins
42 Yukon vehicle
43 Gershwin's "—, Lucille"
44 Saroyan hero
45 Presidential prerogative
46 Paradise
47 Light opera by Friml
54 City on the Penobscot
55 Denomination
60 "Picnic" playwright
62 Greenhouse for Osages
63 Touches up old masters
64 Atelier item
65 Fail to keep a date
66 Unkempt
70 — Jones, golf great
71 Fictional Ethan
72 Neural networks
73 He played Chan
74 Nostrils
75 Amazon queen who drowned off Greece
76 Contrite person
78 Asian holiday
79 Triumphant cries
80 Liking, in Lyon
81 Arrest



Solutions to last week's puzzles appear on Page 64. A new puzzle tomorrow and every weekday.

By C. J. Angio

Diagramless, 27 x 13 By Norton Rhoades

ACROSS
40 Mann and Dewey
42 Where the crocks are
45 "Porridge" component
46 Pilgrim's greeting to an Indian
47 Names
51 Altar words
52 Make jubilant
53 — Triomphe
54 Cantab's rival
55 Kind of port
56 Santa's mo.
57 Pronoun
58 Shade tree
59 Wine vessel
60 Knock
61 Where the stockings are hung
62 Young haddock
63 Unwanted radio noise
64 Eton boys' fathers
65 What goes up the chimney
66 Most tender
67 Kindler
68 Mansion occupant: Abbr.
69 — Cinders of comics
70 Bonehead
71 Cuckoo
72 Actress Zadora
73 Credo
74 Thurber's daydreamer
75 Most peculiar
76 Tenant
77 Goddess of wisdom
78 Stuyvesant was one
79 Station
80 Serve tea
81 Actress Garr
82 "Tell it — in Gath"
83 Had expectations
84 Violinist Stern
85 With 20 Across, builders of certain big houses
86 Candle
87 Superlative suffix
88 River to the Ubangi
89 Secret language
90 Type style
91 Furniture style
92 Writer Ephron
93 Wolfish look
94 — Cinders of comics
95 Bonehead

PERFORMANCE

Machine-Age Muse

Steve Wasserman

The age has an engine, but no engineer.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Hallelujah. Yodellayheehoo. Every man for himself. Golden cities. Golden towns. Thanks for the ride.

—Laurie Anderson

United States,
created and performed
by Laurie Anderson,
Los Angeles, March 1983.

THE STAGE is black save for a white platform on which several microphones and a violin rest. A tamboura leans against it. A small black box with blinking red lights stands near the lip of the stage. Two towers of black speakers flank the proscenium arch. A drum set sits at stage-right, an electronic synthesizer in front of it. Another keyboard instrument is at stage-left. Several microphones are scattered about. Behind the white platform, dwarfing everything, is a movie screen. On it are projected two words—UNITED STATES—and four clocks (set at one, two, three, and four). They glimmer unevenly as if caught in the headlights of a passing car, or the flashlight of a cop on patrol.

As the lights go down, a small figure clad entirely in black, except for the occasional flash of bright red socks, walks onto the stage, picks up the violin, and with back to the audience begins to play. The sound is thunderous, relentless, rhythmic, like the cries of large animals in a stampede. A red map of the world fills the screen. Continents begin to pulsate and sway. North America turns into a bird (an eagle?), its claws grip Mexico and Latin America, which dangle helplessly. Africa rocks to the beat, so do India and Southeast Asia. Russia looks bloated. Suddenly a grid pattern (prison bars?) covers the world. The music stops. The figure in black turns round to face the audience. She is wearing white glasses as if blind. Her electric violin glows as if irradiated. Her name is Laurie Anderson and she has, as she says in the show, “been baffling audiences for years with her special blend of music... slides... films... tapes... hand gestures and more—Hey hey hey hey hey... Much more.”

“United States: Parts I-IV,” Anderson’s ambitious five-hour attempt to examine America, its dreams and nightmares, as if it were a mental patient awaiting analysis, was given its premiere in February at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since then, she has performed an abridged version (lasting 2½ hours and including almost the whole of Parts III and IV) in sixteen American cities and several in Europe. In either version, “United States” is about an America gone awry, its people both liberated and lobotomized by the machines they have invented to assure prosperity. It is about our fascination with utopia, pastoral and industrial, about remembering and forgetting.

Fastening on the flotsam of urban America, Anderson manages the difficult feat of leavening her critique of industrial life with a sense of humor that

disarms even as it disturbs. Her reflections on science, money, transportation, and love are saved from pretension by an absurdist wit and an ear for the nonsequiturs of everyday talk. If her work sometimes seems riven with cliché, it is redeemed by her wry irony, her winking acknowledgment that this is so. Not the

remain cinematic in our minds like fragmentary dynamic symphonies of gestures, words, lights, and sounds.” Unlike Marinetti, however, Anderson can’t believe in the apotheosis of machines. Science seduces but it too often feels like rape. She seasons her passion with a skeptic’s pessimism. Indeed, it might be said that Laurie Anderson is America’s first post-utopian pop artist.

“United States” is a kind of multimedia séance with Anderson as the medium through which spirits are summoned and through whom they speak. Her voice is often inflected in the somnolent manner of a sleepwalker. Electronic devices are used to alter its range and pitch. She wields her violin bow (which is strung with prerecorded magnetic tape allowing the instrument to “speak” when drawn against the playback heads attached to the violin’s bridge) as if it were a magician’s rod,

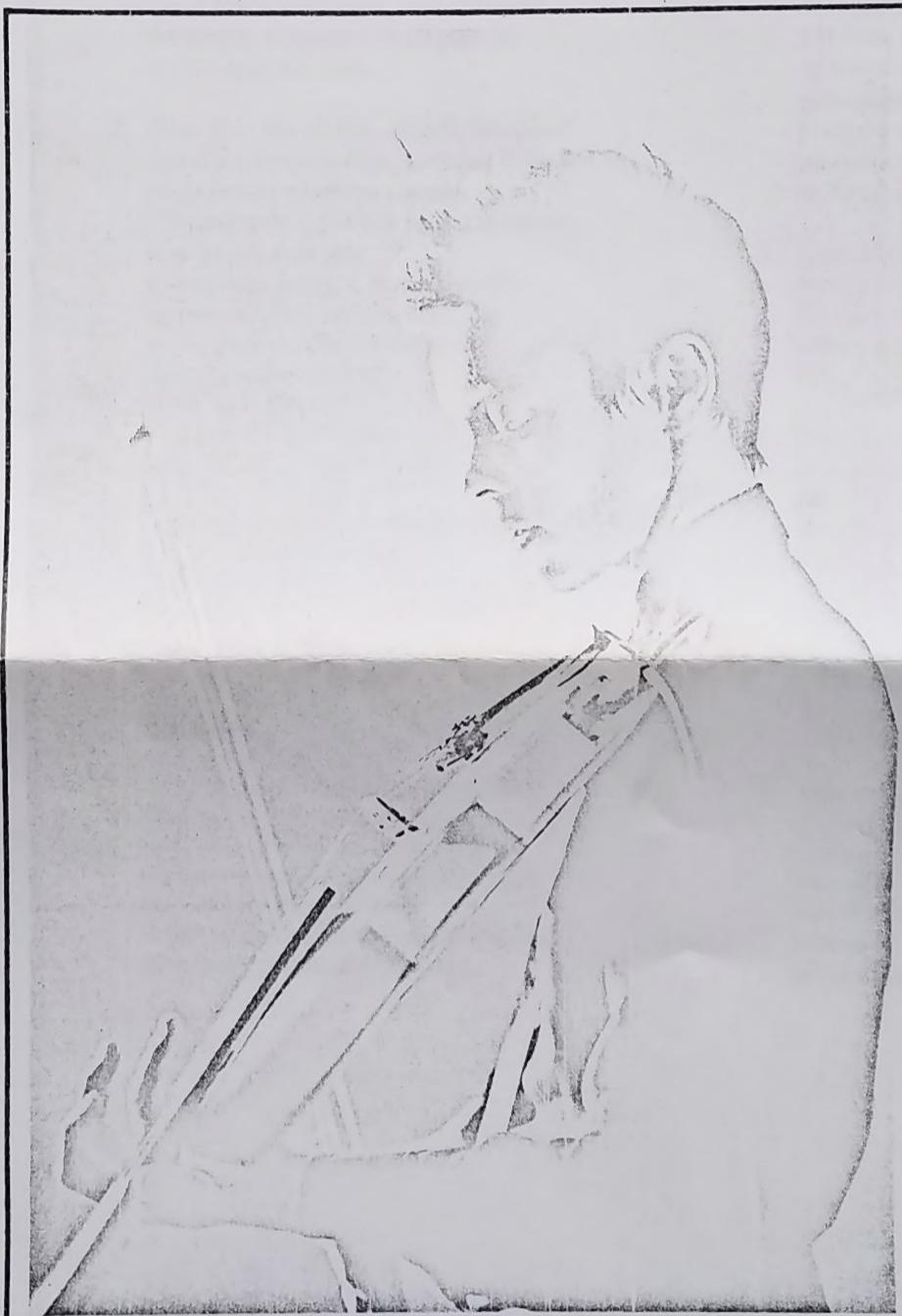
the ever-present backdrop to Anderson’s electronic cabaret, serves as a kind of illuminated dream screen onto which projections of such objects are cast. These images are frequently enigmatic, luminous, disquieting.

Anderson is an archaeologist of language and memory. Her work suggests that the past, however repressed, has a way of intruding on the present. It may fade from memory, but something lingers, waiting to be discovered and deciphered. She knows that the steady erosion of language is the first step in the destruction of thought. Without words, memory is impossible—thus her fascination with machines with memories (the camera, the answering machine, the tape recorder). It is a considerable paradox, however, that as our means of preserving memory have grown ever more sophisticated, we seem increasingly to be a people without memory.

Among the most moving of her tales is the story of an elderly blind Cree Indian who is asked to sing traditional hunting songs for a documentary of his tribe. The video equipment is set up in a tin Quonset hut. The lights are turned on. The old man starts to sing, but soon falters as he gropes for the words to the songs he never learned. As Anderson tells it, “He just kept starting over and sweating and rocking back and forth. The only words he really seemed sure of were ‘Hey ah... hey ah hey... hey...’” On the screen, while Anderson sings, the image of a red buffalo flickers, like the shadow of a forgotten ancestor. Words appear on the screen in a kind of simultaneous translation (confession?) of the old man’s feeble chant: “I never went hunting... I never sang the songs... of my fathers... I am singing for this movie... I am doing this for money... I remember Grandfather. He lay on his back while he was dying... I think I am no one....”

“AFTER electricity,” Mayakovsky once remarked, “I lost interest in nature. Too backward.” The Russian poet was by no means the first to utter such sentiments. Americans have long been enrolled in the cult of the machine. Ever since Jacob Bigelow, a Harvard professor, coined the word “technology” in 1829, Americans have rushed to praise and promote the blessings of industrial invention. The doubts of Europeans like Thomas Carlyle (who regretfully dubbed the nineteenth century the “Age of Machinery”) or Baudelaire (who dismissed America as a republic “of counting-house morality”) were shunted aside. Men like Whitney and Edison, it was thought, held the keys that would unlock the door to the munificent future.

Emerson was among the more enthusiastic boosters of the new Machine Age. He looked forward to the day “when the whole land is a garden, and the people have grown up in the bower of a paradise.” He was sure America was “the country of the Future,” that the pastoral paradise inherent in the American enterprise was made more certain as a result of technological progress. Only after a ten-month visit to England did he begin to have doubts. In “English Traits,” Emerson’s grim reflections on the sooty reality of the Industrial Revolution, he wrote: “Mines, forges, mills, breweries, railroads, steam-pump, steam-plough, drill of regiments, drill of police, rule of court and



Laurie Anderson (photo by Paula Court)

cliché of consciousness, but the consciousness of cliché informs her impish sensibility.

Anderson’s dramatic methods are, as Greil Marcus has noted, largely derived from the avant-garde experiments of the Futurists. Her love of radical juxtaposition also owes much to Surrealist conceits. Marinetti’s call for a “Futurist Synthetic Theater” offers perhaps the best description of Anderson’s dramatic techniques. He wanted a theater that “bombs us with squalls of fragments of interconnected events... since in daily life we nearly always encounter mere flashes of argument made momentary by our modern experience, in a tram, a cafe, a railway station, which

capable of conjuring up images of urban America (microchips, automobiles, skyscrapers), of evoking frightening apparitions of everyday life (a three-pronged electric wall socket, for example, is enlarged to look like a skull). Her show is about possession, spirits, voices.

“Our plan is to drop a lot of odd objects onto your country from the air,” she declares. “And some of these objects will be useful. And some of them will just be odd. Proving that these oddities were produced by a people free enough to think of making them in the first place.” Such objects include telephones, apple pie, Kennedy half-dollars. They are blown up to immense, often grotesque proportions. The movie screen,

shop-rule have operated to give a mechanical regularity to all the habit and action of men. A terrible machine has possessed itself of the ground, the air, the men and women, and hardly even thought is free." The misery machines seemed to bring in their wake filled Emerson with despair. "I cannot think the most judicious tubing a compensation for metaphysical debility. . . . Machinery is good, but mother-wit is better." The industrial juggernaut was not to be so easily persuaded. Today, the atomic bomb stands poised to clinch the argument.

Anderson's work is precisely about the ghost in the machine, the nagging suspicion that something has gone terribly wrong. She longs for escape and solitude. She tells of a dream that takes place in the tropics: "I'm not a person in this dream. I'm a place. . . . And I have no eyes, no hands. . . . And there's no. . . . no scale. Just a lot of details. Just a slow accumulation of details." She sings a song: *Days, I remember cities. Nights, I dream about a perfect place. Days, I dive by the wreck. Nights, I swim in the blue lagoon.*

For Anderson, Manhattan's skyscrapers can no longer be worshipped as benign totems of America's industrial destiny. Nor can they easily be seen, as Le Corbusier saw them, as "hot jazz in stone and steel." Instead, these ubiquitous monoliths of the modern metropolis recall Rousseau's warning that "Cities are the abyss of the human species." "There are ten million stories in the naked city," Anderson intones, "but nobody can remember which one is theirs." The proliferation of machines designed to pierce the physiological barriers that separate people (airplanes, telephones, television) has ironically resulted in increased psychological estrangement. The telephone as prophylactic, as *conversation interruptus*, is the subject of an amusing satire in which Anderson is besieged by a barrage of calls from friends, associates, acquaintances. It ends with a friend urging Anderson to ring up any time she wants to talk: the answering machine will always be on.

Despite Anderson's misgivings, she isn't willing entirely to condemn helter-skelter science. Its sensuousness is too seductive. Besides, without machines she is mute. Nevertheless, a sense of doom pervades her work. (The torch clenched in the hand of the upraised arm of the Statue of Liberty, for example, is revealed as the blast-off of a nuclear warhead. The show climaxes with a prolonged film of exploding fireworks that burn incandescent arcs in the canvas of the night, while images of astronauts on the moon, Meteor Crater near Winslow, Arizona, an advertisement for Coca-Cola in Russian, swirl on the screen. The music is deafening.) Something more fundamental than the demise of the American dream is at stake in all this. Anderson's real achievement is her acknowledgment that the unfettered faith in the future made possible by the rise of science is no more.

Days after the show ended, I remained haunted by her final image: an airplane, tumbling over and over in the inky darkness of space, directionless, as if it were a ghost ship bereft of its pilot—the passengers, I imagine, strapped to their seats, bound together on a collective journey toward the unknown. □

The Qualifying Exam

1. What are chromosomes?

True magicians:
a dinosaur loses its dingy scales,
disappears into the foliage, and emerges
with yellow feathers and a tiny beak.
A fish grows legs, lumbers onto land.
Millennia later its descendants
speak many languages, remembering
the jungle, those first hard breaths
in the succulent heat.

2. How does the mitotic spindle function?

Spindle fibers lengthen, proteins added—
perhaps like pearls to a string.
Chromosome pairs line up at the center,
leap apart, then ride
to opposite poles. A woman's belly
grows rounder, cells multiplying
in mathematically precise arrays.
Paired primordia fuse
from head toward tail,
and a microscopic heart
twitches, then begins to beat.

3. I can see you beautifully without a phase plate.

Why is one necessary
in a phase contrast microscope?
You see that I have many colors:
my dress is plaid,
my hair is golden brown,
my eyes are hazel.
This has to do with the properties
of light. You see me
rimmed with fire, my eyes luminous,
due to reflection and absorption.
A single cell is transparent—light
slides through an invisible labyrinth,
bending slightly, the way
a person can pass through the world,
skimming patterns in the haze.

4. How do you know that what you see in an electron microscope is real?

I could talk about structure and function
and cross-checking with different techniques.
But how do you know that what you see
with a light microscope, a telescope,
or your eye is real?
It reduces to a matter of faith:
I believe in the fine structure
of mitochondria, the energy
generated in membranes there.
I believe that protein is synthesized
on endoplasmic reticulum. I believe
in ribosomes. I believe I am here.

5. How is science education different from other kinds of education?

It's the way moonlight differs from Diana,
energy differs from dancing, a neuron
differs from anger, a synapse from love.

6. What are theories of education?

The information they cite is diverse:
a lever-pushing rat in a metal box,
a computer spewing out answers,
a child classifying shapes.
We want to map the cobwebby brain,
where astrocytes cluster like stars
at the edge of space. The universe
folds on itself, interneurons firing.
A child puts an arc on a circle
and time curves back to its source.

7. What is science?

A gypsy. She shows you how
to predict the future: assess the past,
then make your calculations.
You can change your destiny. It's easy
as measuring the potential across a membrane
or detecting a neutron star.

—Lucille Day

